

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method of supervising personal exposure to a consumer electronics device having a V-chip, the method comprising:
- receiving a program signal suitable for conversion by the consumer electronics device into user discernible information;
 - receiving a content-based indicator indicative of the content of the user discernible information and timing information indicative of a reference time;
 - selecting a content-based specification and a first finite time range specification associated with the selected content-based specification, wherein the first finite time range specification is less than twenty-four hours in duration;
 - comparing the reference time with the first finite time range specification ~~with the reference time;~~
 - allowing user review of user discernible information without user input ~~or comparison of received content-based indicator with a content-based specification~~ if the reference time is outside the first finite time range specification;
 - comparing the selected content-based specification with the received content-based indicator when the reference time falls within the first finite time range specification; and
 - impairing the program signal if the received content-based indicator exceeds the content-based specification associated with the first finite time range specification when the reference time falls within the first finite time range specification.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the content-based indicator is

carried by the program signal.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the content-based indicator and the timing information are carried by the program signal.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the timing information is generated within the consumer electronics device.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the reference time indicated by the timing information is the current time.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each of the received content-based indicator and the selected content-based specification is a rating.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, further comprising generating a block control signal if the received rating exceeds the selected rating.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each of the received content-based indicator and the selected content-based specification is a subject matter category.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8 further comprising generating a block control signal if the received content-based indicator subject matter

category matches the selected subject matter category.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising generating a control signal based on the comparison between the content-based specification and the received content-based indicator, wherein the control signal is a block control signal if the received content-based indicator exceeds the content-based specification, and wherein the program signal is impaired in response to the block control signal.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the program signal is blocked in response to the block control signal.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the consumer electronics device is a television system and the user discernible information comprises audio/video information.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of supervising the exposure to a consumer electronics device having a V-chip, the method comprising:

receiving a program signal suitable for conversion by the consumer electronics device into user discernible information;

receiving a content-based rating indicative of the content of the user discernible information;

receiving a timing signal indicative of a reference time;

selecting one or more finite time range specifications corresponding to a twenty-four hour period, wherein each of the one or more finite time range specifications is less than twenty-four hours in duration,

selecting a content-based rating specification for each of the one or more finite time range specifications, wherein a content based rating specification is associated with each of the one or more ~~content-based rating finite time range specifications~~, wherein the content based rating specifications associated with the one or more finite time range specifications include one or more content-based rating specifications;

comparing the reference time with the one or more finite time range specifications ~~with the reference time;~~

allowing user review of user discernible information without user input ~~or comparison of received content-based indicator with a content-based specification~~ if the reference time is outside each of the one or more finite time range specifications;

comparing the received content-based rating when the reference time falls within ~~a finite time range specification of one of~~ the one or more finite time range specifications with the content-based specification associated with the one of the one or more finite time range specifications; and

impairing the program signal if the received content-based rating exceeds the content-based rating associated with the one of the one or more finite time range specifications.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the program signal is impaired by scrambling the program signal.

15. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the program signal is impaired by blocking the program signal.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein the one or more selected time range specifications repeats for each day of a workweek.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
selecting a second content-based rating specification and a second finite time range specification, the second finite time range specification associated with the second content-based rating, wherein the second content-based rating is different from the first content-based rating.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
selecting a second finite time range specification associated with the first content-based rating specification, wherein the second finite time range specification is different from the first finite time range specification.

19. (Currently Amended) A recordable medium for a consumer electronics device having a V-chip comprising:

a computer program comprising steps for:

receiving timing information indicative of a reference time and a content-based indicator indicative of the content of the user discernible information into

which a program signal received by the consumer electronics device is converted;

selecting a content-based rating and a finite time range specification associated with the selected content-based specification, wherein the finite time range specification is less than twenty-four hours in duration;

comparing the finite time range specification with the reference time;

disabling the V-chip without user input if the reference time is outside the finite time range specification;

comparing the selected content-based specification with the received content-based indicator when the reference time falls within the finite time range specification; and

generating a control signal based on the comparison between the selected content-based specification associated with the finite time range specification and the received content-based indicator.

20. (Original) The recordable medium of claim 19, wherein each of the received content-based indicator and the selected content-based specification is a rating.

21. (Previously Presented) The recordable medium of claim 20, wherein the control signal is generated if the received rating exceeds the selected rating.

22. (Original) The recordable medium of claim 19, wherein each of the received content-based indicator and the selected content-based specification is a subject matter category.

23. (Previously Presented) The recordable medium of claim 22, wherein the control signal is generated if the received subject matter category matches the selected subject matter category.

24. (Original) The recordable medium of claim 19, wherein the control signal is generated to impair the program signal.

25. (Currently Amended) A consumer electronics device having a V-chip for supervising personal exposure to user discernible information, comprising:

a non-volatile memory configured to store one or more finite time range specifications and one or more content-based specifications wherein each of the one or more finite time range specifications is less than twenty-four hours in duration and has a content-based specification of the one or more content-based specifications associated there with;

a logic unit coupled to the non-volatile memory and being configured to compare a received reference time with the one or more finite time range specifications and to disable the V-chip without user input if the reference time is outside the one or more finite time range specifications, and to compare a received content-based indicator with a content-based specification of the one or more content-based specifications associated with a finite time range specification when the reference time falls within a finite time range specification of the one or more finite time range specifications, the logic unit further configured to selectively generate one of a first and a second control signals in

response to the comparison between the content-based indicator and the content-based specification associated with the finite time range specification; and

a signal impairment mechanism coupled to the logic unit and configured for, based on the control signals, selectively passing a received program signal there through without substantial impairment or impairing the program signal.

26. (Original) The consumer electronics device of claim 25, further comprising an output device coupled to the signal impairment mechanism for transforming the program signal into the user discernible information.

27. (Previously Presented) The consumer electronics device of claim 25, further comprising a data entry system for selectively inputting the one or more content-based specifications and associated finite time range specifications into the non-volatile memory for storage.

28. (Original) The consumer electronics device of claim 25, wherein the non-volatile memory includes a look-up list for storing a plurality of content-based specifications and associated finite time range specifications.

29. (Original) The consumer electronics device of claim 25, wherein the program signal carries the content-based indicator and reference time, and further comprising a data extraction device coupled to the logic unit for extracting the content-based indicator and reference time from the program signal.

30. (Original) The consumer electronics device of claim 25, wherein the signal impairment device is a switch.

31. (Original) The consumer electronics device of claim 25, wherein the output device is a television system audio/video output device.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the content-based specification and the finite time range specification are selected by a user of the consumer electronics device by inputting the content-based specification and finite time range specification into the consumer electronics device.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the content-based specification and the finite time range specification are selected by a user of the consumer electronics device by selecting a content-based specification and finite time range specification pre-programmed by the manufacturer of the consumer electronics device.

34. (Previously Presented) The consumer electronics device of claim 25, wherein the one or more content-based specifications and the one or more finite time range specification are pre-programmed by the manufacturer of the consumer electronics device, and further comprising a data entry system for selecting the pre-programmed content-based specification and finite time range specification.

35. (Previously Presented) The consumer electronics device of claim 25, wherein the first control signal is generated if the content-based indicator is within an allowable range of indicators defined by the content-based specification and wherein the second control signal is generated if the content-based indicator is outside the allowable range of indicators.

36. (Previously Presented) The consumer electronics device of claim 35, wherein the first control signal is usable to disable the V-chip.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17, wherein allowing user review of user discernible information without comparison of received content-based indicator with a content-based specification further comprises allowing user review of user discernible information without comparison of received content-based indicator with a content-based specification if the reference time is outside the first and second finite time range specifications.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37, further comprising comparing the second selected content-based rating with the received content-based rating when the reference time falls within the second finite time range specification.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, further comprising impairing the program signal if the received content-based rating exceeds the second selected content-based rating.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, wherein allowing user review of user discernible information without comparison of received content-based indicator with a content-based specification further comprises allowing user review of user discernible information without comparison of received content-based indicator with a content-based specification if the reference time is outside the first and second finite time range specifications.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, further comprising comparing the selected content-based rating with the received content-based rating when the reference time falls within the second finite time range specification.

42. (Previously Presented) The consumer electronics device of claim 25, wherein the non-volatile memory is further configured to store a first and a second finite time range specification and the logic unit is further configured to compare the received reference time with the second finite time range specification and to disable the V-chip if the reference time is outside the first and second finite time range specifications.

43. (Previously Presented) The consumer electronics device of claim 42, wherein the second finite time range specification is associated with a first content-based specification.

44. (Previously Presented) The consumer electronics device of claim 42,

wherein the non-volatile memory is further configured to store a second content-based specification associated with the second finite time range specification and the logic unit is further configured to compare the second content-based specification with the content-based indicator and selectively generate one of the first and second control signals in response to the comparison between the content-based indicator and the second content-based specification, wherein the second content-based specification is different from the first content-based specification.

45. (Previously Presented) The recordable medium of claim 19, wherein the step of disabling the V-chip includes generating a control signal if the reference time is outside the finite time range specification, wherein the control signal is generated to allow the program signal to pass un-impaired.

46. (Previously Presented) The recordable medium of claim 25, wherein disabling the V-chip includes the Logic Unit being further configured to generate a control signal if the reference time is outside the finite time range specifications, wherein the control signal is generated to allow the program signal to pass the signal impairment mechanism un-impaired.